

# The Use Of System Theory In National System With Reference To The Behaviour Of Any Country In Crisis: (A Study Of Libya)

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## Abstract

Considering the development of an all-inclusive and abstract theory as unattainable by empirical methods, political scientists have adopted the limited perspective of systems theory. The Political Systems Theory according to Easton's Model Analysis represents interdisciplinary nature of modern political science (Jones 1977). System concepts make empirical and comparative study possible; even of those political institutions, apart from the states, such as international political system, city political party, etc. This wider and in-depth perspective of system approach is suitable to look into the Libyan crisis. The work is going to analyze the political behaviour of Libya based on the four major components of System theory; Demands and Supports as "Inputs", decisions on Demands and Supports as "Outputs", application of policy as "Outcomes", and response to new policy as "Feedback" (Lambert 1968). Lastly, we observe the break down and dysfunction of the Libyan political system that has brought social unrest. The study analysis covers the political system under Muammar Gaddafi's regime.

**Keywords:** System Theory, Libyan Crisis, Easton's theory, Political System

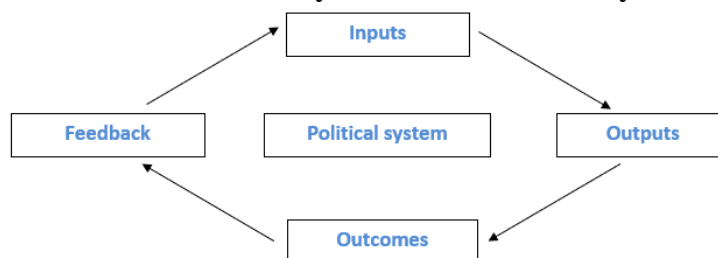
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## I. Introduction

Let us start with a short political history of Libya. Muammar Gaddafi (1969 – 2011) spent over four decades in power. He became the leader of the Libya on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1969. He ousted King Idris I in a bloodless coup d'état. Libyan Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) headed by Gaddafi abolished the monarchy and the new Libyan African Republic (Omar 2014). After coming to power, the RCC government initiated a process of directing funds towards providing education, healthcare and housing for all. Under Gaddafi, per capita income in the country rose to more than US \$11,000, the fifth-highest in Africa. Muammar Gaddafi had not been in good terms with the Western countries with the issues of nuclear, terrorism, human rights and democracy, African unionism, etc. Muammar Gaddafi had powerful enemies in Libya and abroad. In early 2011, a civil war broke out in the context of the wider "Arab Spring". The Anti-Gaddafi forces formed a committee named the National Transitional Council (NTC), on 27 February, 2011 (Schmitt and Eric 2015). It was meant to act as an interim authority in the rebel-controlled areas. A multinational coalition led by NATO forces intervened on 21 March, 2011. Shortly thereafter; the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant against Gaddafi and his entourage on 27 June, 2011. Gaddafi was ousted from power in the wake of the fall of Tripoli to the rebel forces on 20 August, 2011; which culminated in the killing of Gaddafi, marked the end of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya regime. Then, violence occurred involving various militias and the new state security forces (Elumani 2016).

## II. The Easton's Theory Model Of A Political System Cycle



### **III. Inputs**

Changes in social or physical environment surrounding political system produce “demand” and “supports” for actions. There were so many changes that Libya experienced within 40 years of Muammar Gaddafi’s regime that demands for changes. And some demands had been there since, throughout colonial history of Libya.

The most immediate demand that rose was the revolution and uprising in other Arab speaking countries that had presented an unprecedented urge and opportunity to demand for change and to show outright political dissatisfaction among the Libyans. Some political analysts see that the major causes of dissatisfaction was overstaying in power of Gaddafi, no more, no less (Daleh 2015). In addition, some communities, in Benghazi, narrative marginalization by the Muammar Gaddafi’s regime as regards to how to distribute political influence in Libya. This is made more complicated and unique by the suffering and neglect experienced by some communities under Gaddafi. These separate narratives are important as they are used to provide legitimacy for why a particular community has greater right to influence the decisions made. However, there was lack of genuine political accountability.

Other intra-societal systems also came in to play. There was the belief that the Eastern/Southern parts of the country were politically and economically side-lined during the Gaddafi period. Also, there was an unrealistic expectation regarding the pace of change. There is a consensus among reviewed literature that high level of expectations on the pace of change in developing a new governance system represents a key potential driver of conflict (Stephen, 2014). These expectations are in many cases unrealistic and demonstrate a lack of wider societal understanding of what is required to build a new state, and those with an interest in promoting specific political or ideological agendas (Daleh, 2014).

The potential of women to participate in government processes in Libya has also been flagged as a divisive issue in available analysis. Also, there was widespread prejudice against black Africans. Some sources argue that the dispute over nationality rights is also closely related to a deeper understanding of the prejudice against black Africans. It is argued that this prejudice has been partly reinforced by the perceived reliance of the Gaddafi regime. According to some narratives, there would have been no inter-Arab fighting in the revolution, as Tawurgha population in Benghazi and Tripoli has been accepted by Arab society because of prejudice against black Africans.

Furthermore, there were concerns over religious divisions. These concerns also stem from nervousness over the impact of greater exposure to foreigners on social values. Looking into the supra-system causes, the degree western and international standards had on human rights and democracy for example, played a major role as well as Islamic standards by especially the ISIL model, this is a clear example of the potential conflicts between international norms and Gaddafi’s government (Worth 2012)

### **IV. Outputs**

These demanding and supporting groups stimulate competition in a political system, leading to decision or outputs surrounding social or physical environment. In this step, the government finds a suitable policy to address the demands and supports (Sussers 1992).

Muammar Gaddafi made unpopular policy based on demands. Some of which were political in nature. He did nothing to immediately make reformation in the political structure of Libya such as the introduction of democratic elections. Some communities thought that they were marginalized, Gaddafi did nothing to compensate their suffering and their neglect and lack of genuine political accountability persisted. It was when he was fast losing power that Gaddafi started to show them unrealistic dreams and expectations. These expectations are in many cases unrealistic and demonstrate a lack of wider societal understanding of what is required for specific political or ideological agendas (Al-Walfalli 2014).

Women participation in governance processes in Libya was hidden under the cloak of the democratic freedom and prejudice against black Africans had not been cleared in the conscience of the Libyan government.

### **V. Outcomes**

After decision or output is made, it interacts with the environment and if it produces changes in the environment, there are outcomes. Those people that were demanding for change were not satisfied with the policy and attitudes of the Libyan government towards their demands. The outcomes have been the persistency of their demand and dissatisfaction (Eric 2005). Some communities are considered to be pro-revolution as well as to be interested in promoting Berber culture and rights. At the same time, some in the community may also have economic interests in control. Az Zawiyah is considered one of the principal pro-revolution areas in Western Libya and is thought to have significant influence at national level. Locally, there is an interest in justice for those suffering during the revolution/conflict period in terms of both:

1. Greater recognition of the community’s role vis-à-vis Misrata and Benghazi; and

2. Punishment for human rights abuses and crimes committed by Gaddafi's forces during the revolution/conflict (Robert 2014)

Due to its suffering during the revolution/conflict, Misrata has become invested in promoting the 'revolution's objectives' – including transition to a democracy and the purging of Gaddafi-era officials. This has involved a substantial role for the community's armed groups in other parts of the country. At the same time, revolutionary fighters from the community have attempted to develop a greater national political influence through a Union of Revolutionaries. Misrata's community is also interested in 'justice' for the human rights abuses and war crimes suffered during the revolution/conflict. This has led to punitive actions by the city's armed groups, including the arrest and detention of those accused of crimes from other communities (Muhammed 2014)

## **VI. Feedback**

Feedback leads to step one as we can see in the above diagram, forming a never-ending cycle. If the system functions as described, then we have a Stable Political System. If the system breaks down, then we have a *Dysfunctional Political System* (Easton 1966).

## **VII. Dysfunction Of The Political System**

In early 2011, a civil war broke out in the context of the wider "Arab Spring". The anti-Gaddafi forces formed a committee named the National Transitional Council (NTC), on 27 February, 2011. It was meant to act as an interim authority in the rebel-controlled areas (Umar 2015). After a number of atrocities were committed by the government with the threat of further bloodshed; a multinational coalition led by NATO forces intervened on 21 March, 2011. Shortly thereafter; the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant against Gaddafi and his entourage on 27 June, 2011. Gaddafi was ousted from power in the wake of the fall of Tripoli to the rebel forces on 20 August, 2011, although pockets of resistance held by forces loyal to Gaddafi's government held out for another two months, especially in Gaddafi's hometown of Sirte, which he declared the new capital of Libya on 1 September, 2011. The fall of the last remaining cities under pro-Gaddafi control and the capture of Sirte on 20 October 2011; which culminated in the killing of Gaddafi, marked the end of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya regime (Elumani 2016).

## **VIII. The Present Status Quo In Libya**

Libya is presently host to a range of local and community-specific armed groups (mostly referred to as 'catibas' or in the pejorative, 'militia'), and a number of nascent national bodies that are still in the process of establishing their legitimacy. The creation of national and nationally-trusted security and justice actors, to replace the range of armed groups that developed during the conflict/revolution, is consistently presented as a key challenge during the transition period. There is a consensus that national security and justice systems were under-developed during the Gaddafi period, with (for example) investment in a series of catibas/militias that reported directly to Gaddafi, family members of trusted aides, rather than a national army. This has meant that there is limited or no culture of accountability in national security institutions, making post-revolution security sector reform in the country more difficult (Smith 2016).

The Warriors Affairs Commission (of Rehabilitation and Development), which is based in Benghazi, in theory provides the main focus for DDR, through a programme of registering revolutionary fighters ('thuwwar'), identifying their aspirations and skills, allocation of some registered thuwwar to government posts – primarily the Ministry of Interior and Defence – and vocational training/development programmes for the remainder (Eric 2016). The Warriors Affairs Commission has been criticized for a 'loose' registration programme, with far more thuwwar than actually exist registered; with some sources also indicating that the Commission is considered to be illegitimate in a number of geographic communities. At the same time, DDR has been complicated by:

- a. Parallel registration processes developed in geographic communities – for example, Misrata's military council had already elaborated a sophisticated process by the time the Commission was up and running;
- b. The Ministry of Interior's registration process linked to the Supreme Security Committees; and
- c. The payments for thuwwar delivered through the Ministry of Social Affairs (Eric 2015)

## **IX. Transitional Authorities**

The National Transitional Council (NTC) is comprised of representatives from all communities in Libya, and has expanded over time both during and after the revolution/conflict. Despite enjoying an initial degree of 'revolutionary legitimacy', the NTC has been variously criticized for having ex-Gaddafi regime members, for alternatively favoring the Eastern and Western parts of Libya, and for a lack of transparency in decision making. Regional Libya is undergoing a significant transition in its regional relationships as well as

internally. While there was little analysis available on the influence of regional states on Libya as at the time of writing, there was a consensus on the impact of the conflict on:

1. State-level political relationships
2. Regional community-level relationships

State-level political relationships between the transitional authorities and Algeria, Chad, Niger, and Mali have deteriorated; with Algeria and Chad, due to accusations of active support for the Gaddafi regime during the revolution/conflict; with Niger and Mali, due to the flow of mercenaries from these countries during the revolution/conflict (Muhammed 2014).

#### **X. Continued Existence Of ‘Pro-Gaddafi’ Areas And ‘Volunteer Forces’**

Sources also point to widespread grievances amongst pre-revolutionaries that some communities that were perceived to be ‘pro-Gaddafi’ are believed to have escaped the revolution, in that they are thought to be presently outside the control of the transitional authorities and are thought to continue to harbor volunteer fighters. These results in fear that these communities could be threatened, intimidated or attacked at any moment. These ‘punitive actions’ are perceived to be proof that their communities are to be marginalized from the new Libya. As such, there is consensus across the range of available resources that perceived ‘punitive actions’ will increase divisions and the likelihood of violent conflict in the future. An important linked grievance for some on the pro-Gaddafi side (or believed to be on the pro-Gaddafi side) is that they have been unable to properly honour men within their family and tribes that died during the conflict/revolution – in that they are unable to publicly refer to them as ‘martyrs’ (Samuel 2015).

#### **XI. Leverage Of Political And Economic Benefit By Pro-Revolution Areas**

At the same time, sources indicate that some of those accused of being pro-Gaddafi believe that these accusations are a way for prominent pro-revolution communities to leverage greater political influence in the new Libya at the expense of those that did not play as substantial a role – because those that believe they sacrificed more during the revolution/conflict, also believe they have a right to greater benefit and control post-revolution. This causes grievances, firstly because such utilization of pro-Gaddafi accusations may directly impact on the political or economic opportunities of the accused community; but secondly, they are in a number of cases thought to be unjust in themselves.

#### **XII. Approaches For Managing Grievances And Fears**

The manner in which grievances and fears from the revolution/conflict are being managed also has a potential to drive tensions, and even a return to violence in Libya (Robert 2015).

#### **XIII. Focus On Punitive Justice And Communal Responsibility**

There is a consensus that those pro-revolution parts of Libya society that suffered abuses and crimes during the revolution/conflict are focused on achieving ‘justice’ through punishment; and believe that reconciliation processes should follow justice (Almini 2015). In some cases, redress goes beyond punishment for those that committed the abuses/crimes at hand, to encompass those that ordered the actions, and the communities of those that committed the actions – collectively, those ‘with blood on their hands’. Importantly, for some on the pro-revolution side, punishment should also extend to all those that ‘volunteered for Gaddafi’ (meaning those that chose to fight in defense of the Gaddafi regime), irrespective of whether they are directly responsible for abuses/crimes or not. Some sources argue that this focus on punitive justice, often through armed groups, indicate a lack of understanding of and support for rule of law processes (Muhammed 2015).

#### **XIV. Use Of Armed Groups, Which In Turn Deepens Grievances And Fear**

There is a consensus that given the absence of functioning and trusted national justice institutions, armed groups have become the main vehicle for communities to exercise ‘justice’ and to manage conflicts with other communities.

#### **XV. Role Of The Media In Driving Fear And Grievance**

There is a common consensus across available analysis that the media played a significant role in driving fear and grievances during the conflict/revolution, and continues to do so. During the revolution/conflict, Gaddafi-administration controlled media outlets were used to threaten a range of inter-community conflict and retributive actions against those participating in the revolution. These threats continue to be referenced by pro-revolution communities as the basis for their fear of future instability and the potential role of communities perceived to be pro-Gaddafi in driving such instability (Robert 2015).

At the same time, Gaddafi-administration controlled media outlets created a good deal of fear in those communities associated with the Gaddafi administration, that if the revolution was successful, then they would

suffer from punitive actions, marginalization in the new Libya and even be forced to comply with austere versions of Islam. Following the revolution, the focus of the media on the revolutionary period, and on the crimes of Gaddafi and his supporters has been analyzed to be divisive and it makes it harder to overcome fears/grievances that one side has towards the other (Elumina 2016).

Conclusively, the situation in Libya remains unstable and could get worse when allied with a feeling that the transitional authorities have become non-inclusive and detached from the revolution. This is especially the case regarding officials in:

1. State security bodies, because of question marks over their actions before and during the revolution; and
2. Libya's foreign delegations, due to concerns over 'outside influence' and the destination of Libya's oil wealth.

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